

Choosing Forgiveness - Audio Series CD

And you, who were dead in your trespasses, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. Colossians 2:13-14 ESV

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 To the contrary. "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:19-21 ESV

"Is it possible that there is someone in your life that you've never forgiven?" Nancy said, "I've had people tell me they've forgiven someone, but then they list all the things the other person has done. They haven't really cleared the record. We're supposed to forgive others as God has forgiven us." The Apostle Paul tells us that our record of debt has been nailed to the cross and that we need to forgive others, too.

Do you have someone in your life that you have not forgiven? Is there someone who hasn't forgiven you?

Are you keeping mental lists of sins that people have committed against you? Jesus tells us that He will forgive us the way we forgive others. If we harbor unforgiveness in our hearts we block the forgiveness that He wants to give us. Forgiveness helps us lay down the heavy burden that we carry as well as allowing the other person to change. It isn't easy to forgive but God will help us if we ask Him.

Are you willing to let God help you forgive those who have wronged you?

We all get hurt. It's not a matter of "if" but rather when it will happen to us. The outcome of our lives isn't determined by whether or not we will get hurt, but rather how we respond to the hurts and struggles that come our way. When we nurse our hurts they grow. We become debt collectors. Forgiveness is like pressing the "delete button", clearing the record, and choosing to let the hurt go.

The Bible tells us that God has forgiven our sins and we need to forgive others. Will you forgive?

We need to instruct our own hearts how to forgive. We have to choose to do what is right even when our feelings want to take us in another direction. We need to choose to forgive for Christ's sake and for our own health, even when the other person doesn't deserve forgiveness. Forgiveness doesn't just happen once. Sometime we need to forgive again and again. As we forgive others we are able to walk in freedom.

Do you struggle with anger or depression? Could these be the result of unforgiveness?

Forgiveness is transferring the person from our courtroom to God's courtroom. When we forgive we say "I'm not the judge, I'm not the jury, I'm just a sinner who is also in need of God's grace and forgiveness every day of my life. When we forgive we allow God to judge and bring the person to a place of restoration and repentance." We recognize that God is sovereign. We relinquish control and let God be in control.

Would you like to heal from the hurts of your past? Are you willing to let God help you?

Forgiveness doesn't mean there won't be consequences for wrong actions, but forgiveness will release the forgiver from a life of bitterness. When we fail to forgive we are captives to the offense. Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door to set us free from a prison of hatred and anger. When we give the offense to God to deal with we no longer have to carry the burden ourselves. *Romans 12:21* tells us, "*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*" We need to learn to trust Him. Sometimes the hurts of the past are buried so deep that we don't even realize the pain we carry inside. God can help us. Ask Him to help you see what the problem is so that you can forgive and heal. He can give us the strength to walk through the pain and struggles of the past and come out stronger and victorious because of Him.

Dear Lord, we know that forgiveness is not easy. We thank You that for Christ's sake You have forgiven us. Help us learn to forgive others. Open our hearts and eyes to the unforgiveness that we harbor in our lives. Show us how to release our pain, bitterness, anger and shame to You so that we can live our lives freely and victoriously for Your name's sake. Amen.